

# GOSSIP OF THE DRAMA FROM MANY POINTS OF VIEW

## The Grand Opera.

### Director Conried Discloses His Plans for the Next Season at the Metropolitan.

SEVERAL announcements of much moment to the musical and operatic world were made recently by Heinrich Conried, the new director of the Metropolitan Grand Opera Company. Among them are a "school of opera," to be opened September 1, a definite intention to produce "Parsifal" next Christmas at the Metropolitan Opera House, despite the opposition of Frau Wagner and the difficulties of obtaining a full score for the production; ample details in the plans for the overhauling of the opera house itself, and the appointment of Herr Carl Lautenschlager, of the Prinz Regenten Theater of Munich, as technical director, with immediate view to the remodeling of the stage.

The services of the following singers for the production of "Parsifal," he announced, had already been obtained: Burgstaller, as Parsifal; Blass, as Gurnemanz; Anton Van Rooy, as Amfortas; Milka Ternina, as Kundry. There is a possibility also of Mme. Nordica's singing in this opera. Jean de Reszke, he said, had wired him "all right about proposition," but no confirmation by letter was yet to hand.

**A School of Opera.**  
Regarding the school of opera, to be situated in New York, Mr. Conried said: "It is intended for those who promise, in my own and the opinion of certain judges in whom I rely, to become great singers. They must be volunteers and must have already undergone a certain amount of training. They will be given free tuition under American and European tutors, whom I shall announce later, and will receive no pay at first. They will be given small prizes, but not in the chorus, which is bad for the voice. Several promising pupils have already volunteered, including four American women who, I think, are likely to become great favorites."

**The Much-Discussed "Parsifal."**  
Regarding the production of "Parsifal" he said: "One feature of my first season will be the production of 'Parsifal.' For the first time Americans in America will be enabled to enjoy a masterpiece which, till now, has been monopolized by Bayreuth. The utmost reverence will be evidenced in the interpretation musically, historically, and scenically. The production of 'Parsifal' will, I have reason to believe, be worthy of the great genius who created it."

"Since my intention to produce 'Parsifal' at the Metropolitan Opera House became known, I have been subjected to much hostile and bitter criticism in Germany. My critics seem to be under the impression that my decision was arrived at suddenly, and that I was actuated less by artistic than by sensational motives. It may be surprising, and perhaps interesting, to them to learn that shortly before the death of the distinguished Anton Seidl I had arranged with that Wagnerian of Wagnerians for an American production of 'Parsifal.' Eight years ago I had offered Dr. Gross, the leading representative of Richard Wagner's heirs, a considerable sum for the authorization to produce 'Parsifal' in this country, although, as I informed him at the time, I was well aware that it was not protected here."

"The time has passed when a master like Wagner is regarded as the exclusive property of even his most intimate and highest friends. True piety in this instance, I believe, lies in spreading abroad the knowledge and the enjoyment of the genius to which not only Bayreuth, but the world, is indebted for 'Parsifal.'"

**Both Old Operas and New.**  
Of the broad outlines of his policy, he declared it was his hope and purpose, provided he was supported by the American public, to place grand opera in this country on a "permanent, sensible and artistic basis."

"Under my management," he said, "American opera-goers will have frequent opportunities of hearing the master works which they admire. Many, and indeed, most of the famous operas and grand music dramas which are already familiar to them will be retained in the Metropolitan repertoire, and should I be aided, as I feel sure I shall be, by the reasonable attitude of the great artists with whom they have been in the past seasons identified, they will in many instances be interpreted by the old favorites."

"New operas and new singers will, however, also be assured a hearing. I shall produce operas with the co-operation of artists who, although famous abroad, may to a majority of Americans be strangers."

**Improving the Support.**  
"My constant aim will be to assume a fitting, artistically satisfying interpretation of the works presented at the Metropolitan Opera House, and the performances will, I venture to hope, be of such all-round excellence that whether the artists who take part in them be new or already known to Americans there will be no ground for unfavorable criticism."

"The Metropolitan orchestra and chorus will be the objects of particular solicitude. The orchestra will be under the direction of conductors of the highest and most unimpeachable reputation, and every department of the Metropolitan Opera House will be in charge of the most able and technically expert hands procurable."

"An artist of high standing will design and superintend the making of the costumes, while an artist of equal excellence will be entrusted with the modeling and execution of the scenery, and I may add that the general stage management will have my special and personal attention. Last, but not least, in order to allow of more adequate productions than have hitherto been possible, the stage of the Metropolitan will be remodeled under the direction of Herr Carl Lautenschlager, of the Prinz Regenten Theater of Munich, one of the most famous theatrical architects in the world, while new and improved lighting arrangements, long needed, will be added to the stage equipments."

**Why Washington is Interested.**  
Mr. Conried announced that he would sail for Europe next Tuesday and return August 17. Rehearsals, he said, would begin September 1, and the opera season would open November 23, probably with "Rigoletto." One opera in English would be included in his first season. On "Parsifal" days, he said, the performance would begin at 5 o'clock, continue until 7, and then, after one hour and a half's intermission, continue until about 10:30. Evening dress, he said, would be the order.

These details of Mr. Conried's purposes and the management of the Metropolitan company are published in The Times because it is believed they are of pronounced interest to Washington music lovers and patrons of the drama. They have a further interest, however, which will probably bring them closer to the general reader. It is almost certain that Mr. Conried will be able to conduct his company at a much lower cost than his predecessor. If that proves to be the case it is practically assured that Washington will share in the fruits of his labors. In these difficult times plans have surely a personal hold on all readers of these columns. A. D. A.

## Past and Future.

### A Generous Supply of Romeo and Juliet in Prospect.

Washington's theater managers issued a defiance to tradition last week by presenting for the "fool" season a series of performances which commended themselves at once to sight and mind. May and June are ordinarily the time of glory for light comedy, light opera, and light costumes. It is the season of much advertising and little achievement. If anyone doubts this let him recall "The Runaways," one of the "attractions" created for the delectation of New York.

But in Washington either good fortune or good judgment has made this year's spring season a notable exception. The Galland company began a most successful engagement by presenting "The School for Scandal" with a fine regard for the original text and the intellect of its patrons. The National presented "The Frisky Mrs. Johnson," a fair play, most capably acted. The Lafayette exhibited Tolstoy's "Resurrection," a play rather beyond the depth of the stock company, but interesting and entertaining nevertheless. Chase's continued its winter policy of giving its patrons clean and enjoyable amusement by offering Victor Herbert's "Serenade," a good opera which was well sung. The Academy responded also to this spirit with Ross McViville's "Sis Hopkins," one of the best actors in one of the best plays to be seen in this country.

The Galland company made most secure its place in the estimation of local theatergoers. The star demonstrated a breadth and force of intelligence which must have surprised everyone excepting her most intimate friends. She is surely a most promising Lady Teazle. About her was gathered one of the best supporting companies which the season has brought to Washington. Mr. Blair sustained all the good impressions made by his earlier visits, and they ranked him as one of the best and most scholarly actors on the American stage. Mr. Roberts, Mr. Kittredge, Mr. Mellis, Miss Wilson and Miss Bourne also established themselves in favor. The company is, on the whole, one of the best in the country.

Its offering for next week is "Romeo and Juliet," and the cast as outlined elsewhere in these columns promises to be harmonious and strong. "Romeo and Juliet" is rarely well presented. Even so, it serves the attention of everyone who knows good poetry, appreciates fine sentiment, and understands the merit of superlative literature. But as it will be acted at the Columbia play should have a comparatively fresh interest.

"Romeo and Juliet" is the bill at the National Theater also. But only for one night. Wednesday evening the Liebler all-star cast, which has been much commented upon in The Times will appear in this great drama, and command, no doubt, much of the same support which will go to the Galland company. Each of these casts recommends itself. They have a certain interest now, however, in that they offer a rare opportunity for contrasting the merits of two stars, not widely dissimilar and about equally endowed.

"The Serenade" is followed at Chase's by "The Highwayman," "The Charity Ball" succeeds "Resurrection," "Sis Hopkins" makes way for "A Little Outcast."

Evidently the "fool" season is not yet upon us.

### Columbia—Galland "Romeo and Juliet."

The production of "Romeo and Juliet" by the Galland company at the Columbia Theater this week gives promise of being one of the most notable presentations of this love tragedy which has been seen in this city for some seasons. The Galland company showed Washington last week what might be expected of it in greater plays. This week will be interesting because the majority of Mr. Luckett's players have appeared in other noteworthy productions of this play, and, as in the case of Sheridan's play, know how to make each role stand out in full significance.

If Miss Galland was admired as Lady Teazle, she is expected to command still more approbation from the public when she appears as Juliet. If any one has an idea that to play Juliet is merely to look sweet and gentle with one or two moments of deep emotion let him watch Miss Galland's interpretation, for she will play all the difficult scenes, some of which are usually omitted by actresses with pretensions to greatness.

She will play that difficult scene when the nurse informs Juliet that Tybalt is dead and Romeo banished. Much emotional work and dramatic force is necessary in this portion of Juliet's work. Miss Adams omitted it entirely. Miss Galland's portion scene will be worthy of study by students of Shakespeare.

As Charles Surface, in "The School for Scandal," John Blair was warmly received. As Romeo, he will have far greater opportunities, because it is in this line of work that he most excels. His Romeo promises to be a creation.



John Blair.

Mr. Blair is handsome and graceful; his every action is a picture, and his beautiful voice will show off to advantage in the Bard of Avon's exquisite verse.

The remaining members of the company will be cast as follows: Mercutio, Fuller Mellish; Paris, William Kittredge; Friar Lawrence, Frank Roberts; Peter, Robert V. Ferguson; Tybalt, Geoffrey Stein; Benvolio, Arthur Buchanan; Capulet, W. H. Post; Montague, J. B. Hollis; apothecary, Percy Leach.

Lady Capulet will be played by Margaret Bourne and the nurse by Kate Denin Wilson.

### Chase's—"The Highwayman."

The "Foxy Quiller" comic opera, "The Highwayman," one of the chief of the successful comedies of Keeney and Harry B. Smith, will be presented at Chase's this week. It should be of great interest for no other reason than the fact that it enjoys the distinction of introducing to the world the now famous part of Foxy Quiller, the Bow Street constable, whose adventures in quest of the hero of the opera are satirized with true Gilbertian directness and humor. The name has been adopted as the synonym of blundering smartness.

The composer has admirably caught the spirit of the times in England when highwaymen flourished, and has produced a score that teems with tuneful and catchy melodies and reaches magnificent climaxes. The book is typical of Harry B. Smith's genius for construction and composition. The characters are interesting and amusing, and picturesquely representative of the people of old England. The plot involves the love affair between Dick Fitzgerald, the hero whose sobriquet furnishes the title of the opera, and Lady Constance Sinclair, together with the strenuous attempts of the Foxy Quiller constabulary to discover the whereabouts of the highwayman.

Another new set of comic opera comedians and singers will be presented, and they represent the best that have yet been heard at Chase's. Laura Millard, the prima donna who sang Dolores in "Florodora" will lend beauty and grace to the part of Lady Constance, and Jerome Sykes' part of Foxy Quiller will be cleverly assumed by William Herman West, a droll and resourceful comedian. John Mayon, the diminutive funmaker, will repeat his first success as Toby, the hostler. Olive Thorns has been engaged to play Lady Pamela, the part in which she made a hit in the New York run. Winsome Little Margaret Robinson will make a fetching Doll Primrose and George Tallman, in the title role, will add to the favor he has already won here. Others will be John Read, one of the original cast; Coit Albertson, late of "The Show Girl"; Osborn Clemson, formerly of "The Messenger"; John E. Dewey, and Gerald Brophy.

Matinees will be given Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday. As the play has never been presented here at less than the \$1.50 scale, it is expected the opportunity will not be neglected by the Chase patrons. The advance sale has been large.

**Lafayette—"The Charity Ball."**  
The Berger Stock Company will be seen next week in a complete and thorough revival of "The Charity Ball." This work of David Belasco and Henry C. DeMille is a fine example of the technical skill evidenced by these playwrights, which assures it the longevity of a good and wholesome play, constructed on strong dramatic lines and imbued with a light comedy.

Since its premier production by Daniel Frohman's Lyceum Theater stock company, more than a decade ago, this play has been almost continually in use by stock companies throughout the country, its last production here having been made at the Lafayette several seasons ago by the stock company.

For its forthcoming production, Stage Manager Frederic Sullivan has made special preparations to assure a smooth and pleasing performance, and to that end has brought to his aid an adequate scenic equipment, while the gowns of the lady members of the company are said to be revelations in the dress-makers' art.

The complete cast follows: John Van Buren, Eugene Ormonde; Dick Van Buren, John T. Sullivan; Alec Robinson, Charles Wyngate; Judge Knox, William H. Tooker; Betts, John Daly Murphy; Mr. Cruger, Myron Leffingwell; Mr.

Creighton, George C. Pearce; Mr. Paxton, Mr. Ely; Jasper, Joseph O'Connor; Ann Cruger, Miss Selene Johnson; Phillips Lee, Miss Jane Rivers; Mrs. De Peyster, Miss Gertrude Berkeley; Bess Van Buren, Miss Susette Jackson, and Sophie, Miss Edna Pearce.

Popular price matinees Wednesday and Saturday, as usual.

### Academy—"A Little Outcast."

"A Little Outcast," which comes to the Academy tomorrow night, was written for men and women who realize the evil in the world, and what this modern, complex civilization of ours loses by its insane worship of the goddess of "getting on." The story of wrongdoing, of false friends, and fear of the world's censure, which is written around the lives of Paul Weston and George De Voe, might be the story of any two men in ordinary life.

The story is one of New York city life, with all its varying changes from exclusive mansions of the great to the squalid hovels of crime, and serves to present some striking stage pictures. Prominent among them are views of a fashionable Fifth Avenue mansion with its white and gold drawing rooms and smart boudoirs; Cooper Union, Five Points, the famous Chinese restaurant in Pell Street, with its gorgeous Oriental colorings and concealed alcoves; a panoramic view of the Battery at night, and the great fire on the Government pier.

### Lyceum—"London Belles" Company.

The next attraction to be offered at Kerman's Lyceum is the Rose Sydel London Belles company. The program calls for two burlesques and an olio, and the olio numbers Rose Sydel, Campbell and Weber, Carnelia and Shirk, the Musical Belles; Ruth Denver and company, Washburn and Grant, the Mozart Comedy Four, and the Masses.

### Miss Galland's Fine Gowns.

Her Costumes for Juliet Highly Commended by a Designer.

In modern times when the costumes and stage settings of plays are so magnificent it is an extraordinary thing to have a star come to this city with a wardrobe which is pronounced superior to that of other stars. Miss Galland's costumes as Lady Teazle were the talk of the town last week. The exquisite taste of the design and the richness of the material spoke volumes for the mind which had designed them. It is interesting to know that each gown was made from a sketch drawn by Miss Galland. She chose the materials, selected the trimmings and gave instructions to her dressmaker just how each costume was to be executed.

Miss Galland's gowns in "Romeo and Juliet" will surpass even those worn by her as Lady Teazle. Hermann, the great costumer, who made the costumes which Eleanor Robson will wear as Juliet, heard such extraordinary reports concerning the beauty of Miss Galland's wardrobe that he asked permission to inspect it. Feeling confident her gowns would not be considered greatly inferior to those of Miss Robson, Miss Galland granted the necessary permission. She had not seen her rival's costumes, and, therefore, did not know just what the great Hermann would say. Imagine her amazement when he tendered his congratulations, saying they were superior to those of Miss Robson.



Bertha Galland.

In design and beauty of coloring to those which he himself had superintended.

As Juliet Miss Galland is to wear a wonderful opalesque gown which is made of a fabric of fish scales showing the varying tints of the opal. With this gown two beautiful underdresses are to be worn, one of pale pink silk crepon covered with even net. The opal colored overdress is made of imported material and has not a companion piece in this country. Another Juliet gown is of gold cloth solidly applied in a coral design about the neck and shoulders. The white gowns are of silk crepe. One cloak to be worn as Juliet is of dark red material overshot in gold thread. This will be used in the scene when Juliet goes to see Friar Lawrence.

### John Blair's Artistic Work.

John Blair made a distinct hit here last week as Charles Surface, the gay young fellow who is still supposed to be sowing his oats. Mr. Blair deserves much credit for his artistic performance of this hilarious comedy role, since it is a matter of fact that personally he much prefers to play serious parts. Those who know Mr. Blair can readily understand this, for he is a young man of much seriousness of purpose in life, who weighs things carefully, and as a consequence is much better suited to

roles of the Romeo and Macbeth order than he is to those of the Sheridan type. However, as Charles Surface, no one would have ever suspected the effort which was required from Mr. Blair in order to give a proper lightness and buoyancy to the part.

As Romeo he will be thoroughly at home, and having studied all the stage business and the various readings of all the prominent actors of the role he may be expected to offer Washington an interpretation which will bear comparison with those of the most famous actors.

## A Body of Rare Players.

### The Liebler "Romeo and Juliet" Company Gathered From Many Sources.

Kyrle Bellew made his first London appearance in support of Adelaide Nielson, in 1879, under the management of Dion Boucicault. He was later leading man of the Haymarket stock company, under Buckstone, at the Lyceum, under Henry Irving, and, coming to America first in '84, won much success as leading man of Lester Wallack's stock company in New York city. Later he starred



Eleanor Robson.

through America for several seasons under the management of Henry E. Abbey, Henry C. Minor and John Stetson, all of whom are dead.

Eight years ago Mr. Bellew formed a business partnership with Mrs. James Brown Potter, and with that actress toured the English-speaking world for five years, acquiring popularity in Australia, India, China, Africa, Japan and England. He has long been among the foremost romantic actors of England.

### Another Romeo.

Eben Plympton was born in Boston, and in that city gained his first histrionic victories. He played Romeo to many of the great Juliets in this country for twenty years, including Adelaide Nielson, Sarah Jewett, Mary Anderson and Julia Marlowe. He was the Romeo with Adelaide Nielson at her first appearance in New York, and was specially engaged for the New York debuts of the other actresses named.

### Character His Forte.

William H. Thompson is generally regarded as an excellent character actor. Most of his success has been won in New York city, but he has done well as the Cardinal in "A Royal Family" with Annie Russell, and Tammas, the old Scotch elder, in "The Little Minister" in other cities with Maude Adams.

Mr. Thompson is now a star under the management of James K. Hackett, and has but just concluded his season with a play entitled "The Bishop's Move," in which he scored a personal success.

### As a Villain.

John E. Kellard is well known as a creator of stage villains. He made his first New York hit in "Held by the Enemy," and he duplicated this success in "Shenandoah," and "The Heart of Maryland." He has supported many leading actresses as leading man, and last appeared here in Shakespearean repertoire with Madame Modjeska, playing Macbeth in "Macbeth," and similar roles. He has starred for the past four seasons in "The Cipher Code," "Taterly," and "The Climbers."

### Keene's Nephew.

Edwin Arden is a nephew of the late tragedian, Thomas W. Keene, and a protégé of the late Edwin Booth. He is regarded as a capable actor. Two years ago he scored a success in Chicago as Metternich in "L'Aiglon," with Maude Adams. Mr. Arden created leading roles in many New York productions, and was a star for ten years in dramas, such as "The Eagle's Nest," and "Raglan's Way," which was written by himself.

### The First Tramp.

William J. Ferguson was a star two decades ago, in farcical comedies. He has spent most of his professional career in New York city, where he is known. He made individual successes as long ago as the first New York production of "Colon Sellers" by John T. Raymond, and "The Mighty Dollar," by W. J. Florence. He was a member of Wallack's company under the father of Lester Wallack, and of Henry E. Abbey's stock company at the Broadway Theater. Ferguson was the creator of the "tramp" on the American stage, and of the first "dude," as well. He made his New York success as the Italian villano, Macari, in Hugh Conway's "Called Back."

### Quit Navy for Stage.

Forrest Robinson, twenty-five years ago, forsook his position as an officer in the United States Navy to accept a

position in Mrs. John Drew's stock company, in Philadelphia. He was afterward a member of the famous Boston Museum stock company, and on the Pacific Coast. Mr. Robinson has also been the leading man for Mrs. Plisko. His Angel Clare in "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" won him much success. In "Love Finds the Way" and "A Bit of Old Chelsea," Mr. Robinson succeeded, and he was starred for some seasons in "Youth," "The World," and other plays.

### Daly's Stage Manager.

George Clarke was for twenty-five years leading man and stage director of Augustin Daly's stock company. Mr. Clarke has played Romeo to the Juliet of Agnes Ethel, Fanny Davenport, and Ada Rehan on many brilliant occasions. He is regarded as a profound student of Shakespeare.

### With the Stars.

Frank C. Bangs was the Marc Antony of that great revival at Booth's Theater in '75-'76, when Edwin Booth played Brutus, Lawrence Barrett Cassius, and E. L. Davenport Julius Caesar.

Mr. Bangs was the leading man for Charlotte Cushman, Mrs. Mowatt, Mary Anderson, and other stars for many years in England and America. Like Mr. Clarke, he starred in Shakespearean repertoire nearly a quarter of a century ago.

### Oldest Actress.

Mrs. W. G. Jones is the oldest actress on the American stage in point of service, antedating Mrs. G. H. Gilbert by several years.

Mrs. Jones was for twenty-five years leading lady at the old Bowery Theater in New York city, supporting Edwin Forrest, Junius Brutus Booth (the father of Edwin Booth) E. L. Davenport, Edwin Eddy, Wyzeman Marshall, and others. She created the heroines in many famous plays, including "Black-Eyed Susan," "Peach Blossom," and other plays of a generation ago. She played Romeo forty years ago to the Juliet of the beautiful Mrs. Farren from London.

### Young, But Successful.

Edmund Breesse commenced his starring career but three years ago in "When Greek Meets Greek" scoring an immediate success. He is favorably regarded, and has been engaged by Liebler and Company as leading man for one of their companies next season.

### New York Favorite.

Miss Ada Dwyer is regarded as an excellent character actress. She has facility, and has made several New York successes. Chief among these was her Jewish Mother in "Children of the Ghetto."

### Miss Robson's Ambition.

Eleanor Robson was starred for the first time this season in a dramatization of Mary Johnston's "Audrey." Miss Robson made an impression in New York in "Arizona," "Unleavened Bread," and the Browning play "In a Balcony." Miss Robson was last seen here two seasons ago as leading woman for Mr. Kyrle Bellew. She has youth, beauty, the genius for hard work, and an inherited talent for the stage, together with indomitable ambition.

## Miss Bingham's Support.

### Notes on One of the Best Companies of the Season.

Some one once said that Clyde Fitch did not know human nature, that his characterizations were overdrawn, that he exaggerated certain phases of life and presented false pictures—all of which may be true to those who have not seen "The Frisky Mrs. Johnson." In other cities, notably New York, where the actor years to play, this piece was treated to severe and adverse criticism. That there was reason for this is manifest, but when one considers the many superior touches given it by the adapter and interpreting players he can do little else than admire the intelligence behind it all.

Wilton Lackaye and W. L. Abington were a joy to the heart of the theatergoer. Both were provided with conventional parts. Both were natural, living, human men, liberally supplied with faults, generously endowed with virility, and given that indescribable something which makes man the embodiment of all that the word "friend" suggests.

The scenes between these two have not been surpassed by anything seen on the local stage for many months. Quiet, forceful, natural methods took the place of theatrical and stagey play. They were as man to man what they would have been in real life. Their pauses were the acme of naturalness, their looks, actions, and every movement apparently uncontrived by the stage director's instructions.

Ferdinand Gottschalk stands alone in his line of work. No one has been able to imitate him—he does not imitate anyone else. For this, the public is grateful in that they have a clever, amusing, really artistic actor who never palls but always entertains. Especially in the last act he gave to a scene which might have proved a flat failure a quiet touch of comedy, which kept the audience in continual good spirits. The trouble he had with his hat and cane, the sickly smile which spread over his face every time he looked at the forbidding countenance of Jim Morly (Lackaye), and his spasmodic references to the weather were but a few instances of the art he brings to bear in his work. Gottschalk is a stage dude without an equal.

Bljoun Fernandez and her ability were unfortunately thrown away on a minor part. She at least took advantage of the opportunity to wear some smart gowns with her customary grace and to adorn a small part as few actresses can. A notable adjunct to the costume worn by Miss Fernandez in the second act was a handsome set of jet which evoked many expressions of admiration from the feminine portion of last week's audiences. Miss Fernandez enjoys the

distinction of being the first woman in New York to adopt this fad, which is now the prevailing fashion in Paris and London. Her ornaments are among the handsomest to be procured in New York, and consist of a necklace and combs. The necklace is formed of a dozen strands of jet, to which is hung a massive heart-shaped pendant. The combs are fashioned after a peculiar pattern, and are among the most unique hair adornments seen this winter.

To Amelia Bingham one is forced to take off his hat metaphorically. Managers may hand out columns of press matter about the number of trains utilized in carrying the scenery for their production to various cities. They may tell of the wonderful costumes imported for the presentation the marvelous stage devices employed to lend effect to the piece, and at the bottom of the list of features, name the cast.

Miss Bingham names her company first, because that is her first consideration and the most important adjunct to the success of her production. She employs actors—not dramatic school graduates, fresh from the vaudeville stage—but people who have had their training in the field, whose intelligence warrants the handling of such scenes as occur in everyday life. Anyone who has studied "elocution" can cry "Me child," but it takes an actor with brains to do what Clyde Fitch asks in the acting of "The Frisky Mrs. Johnson."

The climax in the second act is proof of this. Jim Morly (Wilton Lackaye) has been made to believe that Nellie Johnson (Amelia Bingham), with whom he is in love, has had an "affair" with a man. Left alone in the drawing-room, his heart almost breaking, he sits down to think it out. Little by little he begins to find flaws in the accusation against her, and when the truth dawns on him that she has taken her sister's sin on her own shoulders and is herself innocent, he throws theatrics to the winds and like a real, live man looks up, his heart full of joy, and says, "God bless her! the frisky Mrs. Johnson."

## Grotesque Costuming.

### Gertrude Berkeley Proves Herself an Artist in That Line.

"My costumes? I have some pretty ones, it is true, but I spend far more time and study in devising the details of eccentric character parts; and it is in such roles that I prefer to appear." Gertrude Berkeley, of the Berger stock company, at the Lafayette Square Opera House thus expressed herself during a brief interval in rehearsal one morning last week.

"The average woman," she continued, "thinks it quite a trial to have even one gown planned and fitted, but in a stock company the scheming of costumes is continuous, and occupies what time is left to us after the learning of parts and the constant drill of rehearsals. Very often there is nothing in the manuscript of a play to indicate how the part should be dressed, and it devolves upon the actress to plan costumes which will harmonize with and emphasize the characteristics. This is all very well in a 'straight' role, where correct and modish clothes are used. Of course, the choice of color falls to Miss Johnson, the leading woman. She selects her costumes for the play to be presented, and the others consult with her, in order to avoid any clashing of colors and styles. In this way the costuming of the women is made to harmonize, and the stage picture is made more beautiful."

Those who watch Miss Berkeley's work are kept in a state of constant surprise by her extreme versatility and her surpassing originality in make-up. The much paraded vanity of women is disproved in her case, for she cares not a jot about looking her best, and rather revels in devising eccentric make-ups, in which her identity is effectually concealed.

In the matter of concealing her identity, Miss Berkeley was especially successful last week, when, in the prison scene, she won a handsome share of the applause for her interpretation of the role of a revoltingly degraded inmate. Miss Berkeley spent the best part of two days about the second-hand shops of Washington in search for a satisfactory gown for this part.

## John Dunsmore, Basso.

### Young Scotchman's Varying Fortunes Point to Final Success.

The big basso, John Dunsmore, of the Chase opera company, who enjoys the distinction of replacing Eugene Cowles with the Bostonians, was twenty-eight years of age last Saturday. He is the youngest basso on the American stage to have reached such a high plane of prominence and artistic worth. Mr. Dunsmore was born in Edinburgh; he ran away from home at the age of fifteen and embarked on a passenger steamer at Glasgow. Reaching this country alone and friendless he picked up odd jobs here and there, and being possessed of a fine natural voice it was not long before he obtained a chorus position. This was eight years ago, and, determining then to become an opera singer, he has displayed courage and persistence in the face of great obstacles. He was first with the Francis Wilson company, then was an understudy in the Augustin Daly musical comedy company, and finally two years with the Bostonians in the basso parts formerly sung by Eugene Cowles.

### His Experience in Italy.

He relates that pretty nearly all the money he saved as a chorus singer during his first season he used to support himself for four months in Milan, Italy. Moretti, the celebrated teacher in Milan, gave him lessons and, as he says, his living cost him little or nothing. Twice since then he has returned to Italy and both times his purse was well filled and he traveled in style.

Mr. Dunsmore is very ambitious and at the present time is pursuing the spe-